

POLICY HANDBOOK

2026-27

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Philosophy of Pathfinders

The purpose of having a Pathfinder Club is to lead its members into a growing, redemptive relationship with Christ, to build its members into responsible, mature individuals, and to involve its members in active selfless service. All Pathfinder leaders are Christians, working hand in hand with parents, teachers, and pastors to provide optimum opportunities for Christian development.

The Pathfinder Club is an extension of the home, school, and church. It is a laboratory where growth and learning flourish. The membership involves youth in grades 5-12 who have a desire for group activities ranging from community to world mission projects, nature activities, and outdoor and camping activities. Investiture Achievement class curriculum and Adventist Youth Honors are part of the total experience.

Above all, Pathfinders gives youth an environment in which to actively expand their personal experience with Christ.

Basic Membership Requirements & Dues

1. Parents must fill out an application form and a medical release form for their Pathfinder(s) at the beginning of each Pathfinder year.
2. Membership requires the applicant to be in the 5th-12th grades.
3. Those in grades 9-12 may also be eligible to participate in the Teen Leadership Training (TLT) program.
4. Members must agree before joining to participate and cooperate in club activities. These include regular club meetings and events with devotionals, honor meetings, Investiture Achievement meetings, drill and marching, Share Your Faith projects, outreach programs, community projects, fundraising activities, and events sponsored by the Michigan Conference.
5. Club dues are to be paid at the beginning of each Pathfinder year. Currently, these are \$50 for one child, \$80 for two children in the same household, and \$100 for three or more children in the same household. At times parents will be asked to supply money and time to support their child's membership and participation in special events.
6. Each member must purchase a Full Dress Class A Uniform. The cost is \$75. As the pathfinder grows, uniform pieces may be exchanged for larger sizes assuming the used pieces are in good condition that could be handed out again for a different pathfinder to use. Please note, any uniform pieces with patches glued on cannot be exchanged; new pieces will need to be purchased. (See Field & Full Dress Uniforms section of this handbook for further details regarding uniform requirements.)

Calendar & Schedule

The Pathfinder calendar year officially runs during the Niles Adventist School year. We typically begin near the end of August and run through mid-May.

Our normal weekly meetings are on Wednesday evenings. Weekend events also occur 1-2 times each month.

Occasionally we may have a special outing or fundraising event in the summer months (June/July).

A calendar of events will be distributed throughout the Pathfinder year, normally 1-2 months in advance. Current calendars are also posted on our website at www.nileswestside.org/pathfinders.

Please note that some events (date/time) on the calendar may be changed due to weather or other circumstances. If a meeting is canceled, we will do our best to notify parents as soon as possible.

Please Note:

For the best Pathfinder experience, members should plan to start at the beginning of the Pathfinder Season and should prioritize attending all meetings and events. If a Pathfinder joins the club late, has other responsibilities (school is a big one!), or other priorities (such as sports), that prevent them from attending a meeting or event, it becomes their responsibility to make up that work if they wish to complete the Honor Requirements or Investiture Achievement Components. While the club can provide details of what work was missed, it will often not be possible to reteach the portions of the curriculum that were missed. Parents may need to facilitate the completion of this work and confirm completion to the appropriate Pathfinder Staff Member.

Weather Policy

If the Niles Adventist School is closed due to weather on a regularly scheduled Pathfinder meeting day, the Pathfinder meeting will be canceled.

Announcements will be made via FlockNote and Facebook with further details, if necessary, by email.

If you have an account on Facebook, please follow our page to see announcements and information posted there. The Niles Four Flags Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Niles-Four-Flags-Pathfinder-Club/81584798170> and can be access using this QR code:



Safety & Security Policies (Pick-up & Drop-off Procedures)

As a club we ask for your cooperation in maintaining a safe transition time by following times and procedures as listed below:

Drop-off at regular/weekly Wednesday evening meetings:

1. Pathfinders should be dropped off at Niles Adventist School **no earlier than 6:15 pm**.
Staff may or may not be present earlier than this. If they are, they are preparing for the evening's activities and are not yet available to supervise Pathfinders.
2. Arrival **no later than 6:25 pm** is encouraged.
This will allow the pathfinder to be ready for fall-in at 6:30.
Being ready should include:
 - a. Having winter/cool-weather clothing removed (see dress code).
 - b. Having changed from boots into tennis shoes (see dress code).
 - c. Having used the restroom and/or had a drink of water so they can remain present throughout worship.
 - d. Having their IA Journal and Bible with them when they fall-in.

Pick-up from regular/weekly Wednesday evening meetings:

1. Parent/designated-adult will need to enter the building to sign-out their Pathfinder(s).
 - a. Our regular Wednesday night meetings usually end after sunset. With it being dark outside, we do not want anyone playing outside and in the parking lot.
Pathfinders are required to remain in the gym until a

designated adult signs them out at the end of the meeting.

- b. Entering the building to sign-out your child(ren) also serves as a valuable time to communicate with the club staff by asking questions, picking up a current monthly calendar/info sheet, or turning in any permission slips that may be due that month.
2. If your child(ren) is getting picked up by a person other than the child's legal parent/guardian, the parent or guardian must communicate in writing (via signed note on paper or text message) to the Director or Deputy Director.
3. If your child(ren) is picked up every week by someone other than their parent/guardian, please see the club Director. The person picking up your child will still need to enter the building to sign out your child.
4. Parents are encouraged to **arrive by 8:15 pm and enter the gym**. Our meetings conclude with Circle-Up which is an announcement time. Please listen in for important details.
5. After dismissal, **parents should sign their Pathfinder(s) out**. Please be certain to sign out before departing with your Pathfinder(s).
6. After dismissal, please plan to **depart by 8:35 pm**. This will give staff members time to wrap-up their responsibilities and depart by 8:45 pm.

Drop-off & Pick-up for **Special Activities**:

1. Drop-off times for all other activities will be announced and printed on the permission form.
2. Pathfinders should be dropped off **no sooner than 15 minutes** before the stated start time.
3. Estimated pick-up times will be announced and printed on the permission form.

4. Updated pick-up times will be provided via FlockNote near the end of the event.
5. Parents are required to check-out with the Director, Deputy Director, or designated staff member before departing with their Pathfinder(s).

Dress Code Standards

The following dress code standards are designed to promote Christian values and promote safety when using the school gym or participating in outdoor activities. Pathfinders are asked to observe the following standards of dress:

1. Clothes will be neat, clean, and presentable without tears.
2. Skirts and shorts must be modest and of knee length when standing.
3. Athletic clothes including jerseys, jogging shorts, tights, and workout sweats are not to be worn.
4. Camouflage clothing and/or military fatigues are not allowed.
5. All clothing must fit properly. Excessively baggy, tight, and/or revealing clothing may not be worn.
6. All shirts and blouses must have sleeves.
7. Flip-flops, sandals, boots, etc. are not to be worn unless specified for a specific reason or event. Tennis shoes are required at regular events and black dress shoes with the full dress uniform.
8. Undergarments must not be visible.
9. Pajamas are reserved for nighttime sleeping.

Dress code standards apply to all Pathfinder functions.

Field & Full Dress Uniforms

The field uniform is to be worn at club meetings and other approved Pathfinder activities if the full dress uniform is not required. Full dress uniform is required for special programs and events such as Induction, Investiture, Pathfinder Sabbath, and others as announced.

Class A (Full Dress) Uniform

1. Black dress pants with belt loops (skirt with belt loops optional for girls), all interior pockets, and straight leg with no cuff at the bottom.
2. Uniform shirt (purchased through the club).
3. Pathfinder belt with pathfinder buckle (purchased through the club).
4. Pathfinder sash, scarf, and slide (purchased through the club).
5. Black dress shoes with black dress socks (or panty hose for girls wearing a skirt).

IA Level Chevrons are worn starting 1/2" below the Pathfinder world. As levels are earned, prior levels are moved down, so the highest level is on top. No space should be left between chevrons, even if a level is skipped.



Left Chest Pocket

The highest earned **IA Level Name Strip** or Master Guide Name Strip is centered above the pocket.

All earned **IA Level Pins** are worn centered across the top of the pocket flap. The highest class pin is to the wearer's left. If a level is skipped, fill in the space with the next higher pin. Do not leave gaps for unearned levels.

If earned, the Master Guide Pin is worn above the Investiture Achievement Level Pins, and in the center of the pocket flap.

The **IA Advanced Level Ribbon Bars** are worn above the class level name strip and center over the button. Bars are arranged as shown. Even if a level is skipped, no space should be left for unearned bars.

The **Good Conduct Award Ribbon Bar** is worn centered above the IA Level Name Strip or the IA Advanced Level Ribbon Bars, if earned.

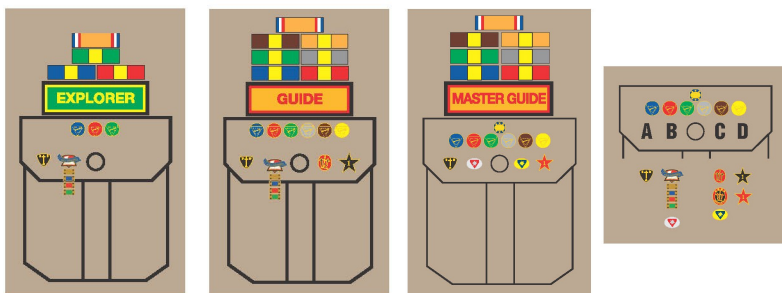
There are four designated locations for other pins on the pocket flap. They are identified as locations A, B, C, & D. Only one pin should be worn in each position at a given time. Normally the “highest” level pin (typically the most recently earned) is worn.

Position A: Baptismal Pin

Position B: Pathfinder Bible Experience Pin or PLA Pin

Position C: TLT Pin, Master TLT Pin, or PIA Pin.

Position D: Pathfinder Triangle, TLT Star, or Staff Service Star.



Sash

The sash represents the Pathfinder's personal history with Pathfinding and commonly includes event patches, honor patches, and drill award pins. Adventurer class pins may also be included on the Pathfinder sash (though no Adventurer awards are to be included). There is no particular requirement for how the sash is arranged. Common options include honors on the front and events on the back or displaying everything in chronological order. If a sash is completely filled, another may be started; however, only one sash should be worn at a time.

Trading Pins

Trading pins (such as from International Camporee) are not considered part of the uniform. They may be included on the Pathfinder's sash but should not be worn on other parts of the uniform.

TLT Shoulder Cord

The TLT Shoulder Cord is worn to indicate **current** participation in the TLT program. It is issued at the next Conference Level Event attended (Camporee, TSO, Fair) after acceptance into the program. TLT Directors are authorized to wear the TLT Shoulder Cord if they so choose.

Upon completion of the four year TLT program, the Pathfinder may keep the Shoulder Cord as a memento but should no longer wear it with their uniform. The Pathfinder will receive a Master TLT pin which is to be worn in Position C on the left chest pocket. Optionally, they may also purchase and wear the Master TLT Shoulder Cord.

If a Pathfinder begins but is unable to complete the TLT program, the Shoulder Cord is to be returned to the Club Director.

Class B (Modified Full Dress) Uniform

The same as Class A with the following modifications:

1. Blue jeans with belt loops (instead of black pants).
2. The sash is not worn.

Class C (Field) Uniform

1. Current club t-shirt is to be fully visible.
 - a. Long sleeves may be worn under the club t-shirt for warmth, if needed.
 - b. If other Pathfinder t-shirts are approved, this will be announced at the beginning of each Pathfinder year.
2. Pants/Shorts of sturdy material (such as jeans, any solid color)
Always be prepared for outdoor activities; the wearing of shorts will not be accepted as a reason to not participate in outdoor activities.
3. Tennis Shoes (If wearing weather specific footwear, such as boots in winter, bring tennis shoes to change into before the meeting begins.)

Regarding Electronics

1. In general, Pathfinders do not need electronics at our regular Wednesday night meetings.
 - a. For that reason, pathfinders are encouraged to leave their electronics at home.
 - b. If electronics are needed, the IA instructor will inform their class accordingly.
 - c. If Pathfinders choose to bring electronics to the meeting, they will be collected on arrival and returned during the pick-up/sign-out process at the end of the meeting.
2. On most overnight trips, electronics are permitted during travel. When permitted, please note:
 - a. Headphones are required if sound is desired.
 - b. Staff reserve the right to observe/listen to any/all pathfinder entertainment. At staff discretion, inappropriate use of or content of electronics may result in confiscation for the duration of the trip.
 - c. Electronics will be collected while onsite for the event (such as at the Northwoods for Camporee and Fair). While we will do our best to secure them, the club and staff do not assume responsibility for any loss, theft, damage, etc.
 - d. If concerned about any of these arrangements, Pathfinders should leave their electronics at home.
 - e. If electronics are not allowed on a trip, this will be announced ahead of time.
 - f. TLTs have the privilege to retain their mobile phones (other electronics will be collected) to facilitate better communication during overnight trips. To retain this privilege, TLTs should refrain from using their phone except as needed to better facilitate the event.

Point System Information

The Pathfinder club has different types of meetings, activities, and events. Each meeting/event is worth a certain number of points depending on what type of event it is. By joining the Niles Four Flags Pathfinder Club, members have agreed to participate and cooperate in club activities.

Members will be given the opportunity to participate in special group activities within the club based on experience, level, and ability. Members must achieve 80% or higher total of points in order to participate in special group activities. These activities include but are not limited to TLT membership, Drill Team, Teen Snow Outing, Club Honor Outings, etc. Members and parents must also be willing to attend special meetings with these groups in order to practice and plan activities or the member will be removed from the group.

TLT members that fall below the 80% required minimum will be notified of their status and will be placed on probation for the 8 weekly meetings following notification. At the conclusion of 8 weekly meetings, the total points must again be at or above the 80% level to remain in the TLT program.

Please note that attendance at all club activities is an important component of membership. Excused absences (such as member illness, family emergency, family vacation, homework priorities, etc.), when explained in a note from the parent, may be credited up to 80% of available point total for that activity. Notes are to be sent in advance or, if unknown until the time of the event, via text message to the Club Director.

The Point System:

	1. Special Meetings	2. Club Meetings	3. Activity Meetings
Attendance	100	50	30
Uniform	70	30	30
Bible	0	30	0
IA Journal	0	20	0
Participation	40	10	10
Total Points	210	140	70

1. Special Meetings/Events Points: Special meetings include, but are not limited to, the Share Your Faith Events, Michigan Conference events, fundraisers, and campouts. These events usually require members to wear their full dress uniform (see Dress Code Standards) unless otherwise stated.

2. Club Meeting Points: These points are for the normal Wednesday night meeting schedule. Pathfinders are expected to wear their field uniform (see Dress Code Standards). They need to bring their Bible and their Investiture Achievement (IA) Journal to the scheduled meeting.

3. Activity Meeting Points: This group of points is generally for activity meetings throughout the year. The activity is usually a fun event and pathfinder members wear their field uniform. Some activity meetings may be optional, required for certain grades for IA achievement, or may be worth bonus points. Pathfinder club members will know in advance any details pertaining to the meeting/event.

Good Conduct Ribbon Bar & Stars

Purpose

While Pathfindering is designated to help youth appreciate the value of group participation, it should not be forgotten that there is scope for the development of the youth as an individual. The Good Conduct Ribbon Bar has been developed to recognize individual achievement over a one-year period of time.

Criteria

The following criteria must be applied when deciding whether a club member is entitled to the Good Conduct Ribbon Bar:

1. Is an active member of the Pathfinder Club and has been for two or more years.
2. Is an example in uniform requirements, is on time for all meetings, and actively works as a leader in their class and the club in general.
3. Believes in and lives up to the Pathfinder Pledge and Law. Displays a loyalty to these Pathfinder ideals and holds them as a sacred honor.
4. Willingly accepts assigned responsibilities and demonstrates initiative and leadership in carrying them out simply or in a team effort.
5. Maintains personal equipment in the best possible condition.
6. Relates to all races and entire groups in a positive Christian manner.
7. Annually completes the current Pathfinder Class and, in addition, earns the offered Honors.

One objective measure that will be used to determine if the above criteria have been met is the points earned throughout the Pathfinder year. To earn this award, the Pathfinder will need to have earned 90% or more of available points.

Please note, more than one Pathfinder may qualify as well as no one qualifying.

How Should it be Worn?

Above the advanced class ribbon awards during the year following the award presentation. If the Pathfinder does not re-qualify, then it must be placed in the Pathfinder's inventory of mementos. The award may only be worn during the year following recognition.

When Should it be Worn?

The award becomes part of the full dress uniform and may be worn for 1 year from the date of presentation. At end of each year, the wearer is reevaluated to determine continuance of privilege or loss of privilege to wear this award. Once a Pathfinder leaves the club, he/she may keep the award for permanent usage only if he/she qualified during his/her final year. Adults not having been Pathfinders should not wear it.

Fundraising Policies

While the Niles Four Flags Pathfinder Club does periodic fundraising for various club needs, the most consistent fundraising goal is related to attendance at the International Camporee every five years. Our fundraisers fall into two broad categories: Individual and Club.

1. Club Fundraisers are an opportunity for all Pathfinders to support the needs of the club that are not covered by the annual club dues. Past examples include the Pathfinder trailer, tents, camping chairs, etc.
2. Individual Fundraisers provide an opportunity for pathfinders to earn funds toward their own required portion to attend the International Camporee.
 - a. Funds earned toward the International Camporee can only be applied toward that event.
 - b. Funds earned by immediate family members (siblings and parents) can be applied toward another family members required portion to attend the International Camporee.
 - c. If non-fundraising funds have been personally paid toward International Camporee attendance and those funds are later covered through fundraising, a refund up to the amount personally paid may be requested.
 - d. Any funds raised above the individual goal set for each pathfinder will be used toward the club's expenses to attend the International Camporee.

Notes

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About us

Niles Four Flags Pathfinder Club

pathfinders@nileswestside.org

www.nileswestside.org/pathfinders

is a ministry of

Niles Westside Seventh-day Adventist Church

1105 Grant Street, Niles, Michigan 49120

www.nileswestside.org

*and is dedicated to mentoring youth into a
closer relationship with Jesus Christ.*

For further information, please contact:

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